

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE THAMES VALLEY
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BTVLEP) BOARD MEETING**

Held Friday 23 March 2018 from 9.30am at Aylesbury College, Oxford Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 8PD

Present: Cllr Neil Blake, Aylesbury Vale District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Nick Naylor, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council
Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Chandler Garvey)
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)
Adam Stronach, Buckinghamshire Business First (Harwood Hutton) (Alternate)

Apologies: Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council

In attendance: Louise Hurren, Ringway Jacobs (Part meeting)
Prof James Bennett, Royal Holloway University (Part meeting)
Richard Turl, BEIS South Central & West
Richard Ambrose, Buckinghamshire County Council
Philippa Batting, BBF Managing Director
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager
Jackie Campbell, BTVLEP Skills Development Manager
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Andrew Smith declared an interest in discussions around agenda item 6, the Story Futures Creative Cluster programme, and agenda item 7c (Local Growth Fund) in relation to Creative Media Skills (as a tenant of Pinewood Studios); he also declared he had recently taken on the Chairmanship of the DCMS/LEP Forum.
- Rebecca Bunting declared an interest in discussions around agenda item 7c (Local Growth Fund) in relation to the bid submitted by Buckinghamshire New University.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 2 February 2018

- The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

2.1 Matters arising:

- **Eastern Link Road South** - Final sign off on the ELR(S) contract letter is expected end March/Early April.

3 OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE EXPRESSWAY

- The Board received an overview on the process being undertaken by Government to identify the broad corridor for the Oxford to Cambridge expressway and, the specific route to be taken, thereafter.
- Comments on the proposed corridor route must be submitted by 12 April, with a decision expected on the preferred route during summer 2018. A consultation exercise is being undertaken with strategic groups, including Local Authorities, LEPs, and environmental groups with the aim of obtaining a balanced view on challenges/opportunities available.

- Prioritisation will be based on Highways England's assessment of growth opportunities along the corridor, including growth identified in Local Plans and possibilities unlocked by the expressway.
- The Expressway offers great potential but the Board felt the consultation exercise has been rushed and there was deep concern at the lack of public engagement prior to the corridor route being agreed.
- No information has been shared on the weightings to be applied to the assessment criteria but it was hoped Highways England would apply greater weight to the concerns/suggestions of those areas to be most affected by the construction of the expressway.
- No clear information has been shared on ingresses/egresses to the Expressway or on linkages to other areas such as Heathrow, the M4 corridor, the East Midlands, Luton etc. The Board felt greater focus is needed on how to ensure the wider geography benefits from this new piece of infrastructure, and were concerned proposals are being assessed against the National Infrastructure Commission's thinking that growth is being held back by a lack of housing supply, which it was considered may not be the case.
- The Board questioned whether a hybrid of the routes proposed might overcome significant issues with the A34, A418 etc that may arise with the existing proposals, and better service the three new Enterprise Zones in Buckinghamshire. It was suggested Government would benefit by awaiting the outcome of Local Industrial Strategy work looking closely at how to unlock growth along the arc area.
- The Board questioned the rationale of placing the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP in the South Western arc group and noted that South Bucks District Council is grouped separately to Chiltern District Council which it felt was unhelpful.
- **An initial response to the consultation will be drafted (and shared before submission) to pick up concerns re criteria weighting, specific corridor route issues, the need to look at north/south connectivity to maximise the benefit of access, for example, to Heathrow, and the poor communication to date with LEPs.**
- **RT/LH undertook to provide answers where possible on some of the areas above.**

4 CAMBRIDGE, MILTON KEYNES, OXFORD GROWTH CORRIDOR

4.1 Local Industrial Strategies

- A task and finish group has been established through Buckinghamshire Advantage to move development of the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy forward, this work then being amalgamated with neighbouring areas to form a cross-corridor strategy by December.
- The vision document created for the corridor has been shared and work will continue to develop this.
- England's Economic Heartland has pressed for LEPs to be driving decisions on economic strategy.
- A major conference is being organised for 21 June 2018 to explore the economic opportunities associated with the corridor.
- Government has said Local Industrial Strategies should be a brief script displaying a clear understanding of the local economy, the potential for growth, and how this growth can be unlocked. **It was agreed to invite Iain Stewart MP, Government's Champion for the Growth Corridor to a future meeting.**

4.2 Science and Innovation Audits

- Science and Innovation Audits are a route through which data can be collected to support the possibility of sector deals discussed when Government launched the Local Industrial Strategy. No cost is associated with these audits, the output of which will be a report on the challenges and opportunities faced and the possibility of unlocking future funding.

4.3 Central Area Growth Board - BTVLEP Representation

- Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils have all independently accepted the invitation to be part of the Central Area Growth Board and felt this offered the benefit of ensuring the county's voice is heard in a wider strategic setting.
- The BTVLEP executive suggested the Central Area Growth Board model does not offer balanced public/private sector representation, or a clear definition on roles and responsibilities.
- Private sector BTVLEP Board members suggested it would make greater sense for the Growth Boards to follow LEP geography across the corridor, enabling better representation of Buckinghamshire's needs

particularly in the phase to come which will look at how to prioritise funding, recognising that growth is not constrained to individual LEP boundaries and the BTVLEP is working with neighbouring LEPs on a number of initiatives.

- **The Board agreed to delay joining the Central Growth Board pending the outcome of the LEP review which may offer greater clarity on where Bucks' best interests may lie.**

5 STORY FUTURES CREATIVE CLUSTER PROGRAMME

(AS left the meeting due to the above noted conflict of interest, NB took over the Chair)

- Professor James Bennett provided an update on the work to secure funding to support digital innovation within the creative industries sector. The sector provides 17% of the UK's GDP, a similar size to manufacturing and large pharma who have both previously benefitted from funding to support research and development.
- The project will bring together world leading technology with world leading storytelling, offering companies the opportunity to experiment and develop new technologies earlier than would otherwise be possible by de-risking financial obligations in an incubator type setting. This will allow, particularly, SMEs to focus on the real world challenges the project will set, with the aim of developing technologies with scale-able potential.
- **The Board agreed to provide representation to the joint LEP steering group advising on the project to ensure added value to local economies; and will provide a further letter supporting the project.**

6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

6.1 Local Growth Fund Programme - Skills Capital Projects

(Andrew Smith remained absent for this item further to the above declaration of interest.)

- **The Board supported the independent assessor's recommendation not to support, at this stage, the bid from Creative Media Skills to develop a film training hub in conjunction with De Montfort. The Board agreed to continue working with CMS so the bid may be brought back at a future date.**

(AS rejoined the meeting. RB left the meeting further to the above declaration of interest; KW also left the meeting due to potential conflicts. NB declared an interest, AVDC being the landlord for UCAV.)

- **Further to the independent assessor's recommendation, the Board agreed to delay considering supporting the creation of a Creative Industries Innovation Hub at Buckinghamshire New University's High Wycombe campus pending review of the success of the previously supported Health & Life Sciences Hub (also at the High Wycombe campus) and the Digital Skills Hub (at UCAV) - a report on this to be brought to a future Board meeting.**
- The BTVLEP/Growth Hub will look at the impact of Permitted Development Rights for Buckinghamshire and how the introduction of innovation/incubation hubs can assist in offsetting the effects of this.

(RB/KW rejoined the meeting)

6.2 Finance, Governance and Assurance

- Board members noted the letter from Stephen Jones, Director for Cities and Local Growth Unit on the Annual Conversation with Government; and that Stephen is keen to attend a future BTVLEP Board.
- BTVLEP has been ranked as "Good" following the Annual Conversation.
- BTVLEP has been asked again to look at the possibility of incorporation; recommendations will be brought to the next Board meeting.
- **The BTVLEP Board endorsed the appointment of Michael Garvey as Aylesbury Vale Enterprise Zone Board Chairman on the understanding that any conflicts of interest can be handled appropriately.**

6.3 Local Growth Fund Programme - Other

- The Board noted the significant progress being made on LGF projects.

6.4 Enterprise Zone

- The Board noted the good progress being made with the Enterprise Zones.
 - Westcott's 5G Innovation Centre will be operational by end March 2018. Richard Harrington has been asked to Chair the Westcott Space Sector Group which has been useful in gaining intelligence on the needs of businesses at the site; this learning will be fed into national Space conversations.
 - Woodlands is still awaiting action from DB Symmetry in developing the site. Section 106 agreements are being analysed and road infrastructure plans are progressing.
- The Board noted URBED have been commissioned to undertake a master-planning review of the Halton, Wendover Woodlands and Green Park sites, AVDC has also been working very closely with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) on possible uses for the site. **Richard Harrington to contact AVDC to ensure work is aligned. Additionally, AVDC are asked to liaise with Buckinghamshire County Council on the work being conducted with the DIO.**

6.5 Skills Update

- The Board noted the huge success of the Enterprise Adviser programme in Bucks, the BTVLEP being only the second LEP area to achieve 100% coverage in schools.
- AS suggested pursuing funding through the Healthy Innovate Fund due to be launched in May aimed at supporting those wishing to take on a role as a carer.

6.6 European Programme Update

- BTVLEP has a number of live calls out currently totalling £4.8m. A significant number of applications have come in for Leader funds and Clay Vales is nearing capacity. A review is underway looking at how to distribute funding to retain the maximum possible in Buckinghamshire.

7 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Thursday 24 May 2018, 10.30am, Pinewood Studios.